

No. XXVI.—THE FOOD OF KINGFISHERS.

Is it usual for Kingfishers to eat Frogs ?

Some time ago I saw one of the larger Kingfishers dive into a stagnant pool and bring up a large frog with which he retired to a neighbouring bough and apparently enjoyed.

S. B. BATES, F.Z.S., &C.

MANSI, KALHA DISTRICT,
W. BURMA,
30th August 1905.

[Kingfishers in this country appear to be almost as omnivorous as toads, and "Eha" on page 46 of his "Common Birds of Bombay" mentions how this white-breasted Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*) feeds on frogs, water insects, crabs, &c., and even swallows small birds when kept in an aviary. We have certainly seen them dive on to dry land and capture lizards (*Calotes versicolor*).

EDITORS.]

No. XXVII.—FOOD OF SNAKES IN CAPTIVITY.

On the 9th July last a phoorsa (*Echis carinata*) kept in captivity in our Museum swallowed another phoorsa which was in the same cage. The victim was only slightly smaller than the other viper and the following day as the meal was apparently too large it was disgorged. It is sometimes difficult to obtain sufficient proper food (mice, &c.,) for such small vipers and the cannibalism was probably therefore induced by extreme hunger. About the same date two pythons (*Python molurus*), a 'ghorpad' or Indian Monitor (*Varanus bengalensis*) and four large bull frogs (*Rana tigrina*) were occupants of another cage in the museum and had been living together in peace for some months. As the pythons appeared to be hungry, two rats were introduced. The 'ghorpad' at once seized one rat, shaking it and killing it with the intention of swallowing it. One of the pythons then seized the 'ghorpad' and commenced to crush it. It was considered necessary then to intervene and the lizard was released from the python's coils. The python then moved round the cage and on one of the large frogs making a jump it was seized and crushed. When it was dead but still in the python's coils, the 'ghorpad' seized hold of one of the frog's hind legs and commenced to swallow that. The python then lost all patience and crushed the lizard, swallowed it, the frog and the rat, and afterwards proceeded to kill and swallow another frog.

Whilst trying to crush the lizard and the frog, the python managed to get its own head and neck within its own coils and very nearly killed itself, since it apparently did not like loosening its coils until the 'ghorpad' was dead. However ultimately the python was able to free its own neck and the result was only the above diminution of the 'happy family'.

W. S. MILLARD,

Honorary Secretary,

Bombay Natural History Society.

6, APOLLO STREET,
BOMBAY, 25th September 1905.